

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-10
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FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1154
INFO AMCONSUL FLORENCE
AMCONSUL GENOA
AMCONSUL MILAN
AMCONSUL NAPLES
AMCONSUL PALERMO
AMCONSUL TRIESTE POUCH
AMCONSUL TURIN POUCH

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, IT
SUBJECT: CONTINUED VIOLENCE IN ITALY AND THE TRIAL OF THE RED
BRIGADES

1. THE LONG AWAITED TRIAL OF MEMBERS OF THE RED BRIGADES IS SCHEDULED TO BEGIN ON MARCH 9 IN TURIN. THE TRIAL WAS TWICE POSTPONED AS A RESULT OF THE ASSASSINATION OF TWO KEY FIGURES-- IN JULY 1976 OF THE PUBLIC PROSECUTOR, FRANCESCO COCO, AND IN APRIL 1977 OF THE HEAD OF THE TURIN BAR ASSOCIATION, FULVIO CROCE. THE TRIAL MAY SUFFER STILL FURTHER DELAYS AS A RESULT OF THE DIFFICULTY IN FINDING THE REQUISITE NUMBER OF JURORS, A POSSIBLE MOTION TO MOVE THE TRIAL TO ANOTHER SITE AND A PROPOSAL TO MELD INTO IT RED BRIGADE TRIALS IN NAPLES AND MILAN. MOREOVER, THE ACCUSED HAVE REFUSED TO ALLOW LAWYERS TO DEFEND THEM, MAINTAINING THAT THEY ARE AT WAR WITH THE STATE AND PRISONERS-OF-WAR TO NOT STAND TRIAL. THIS SITUATION COULD FURTHER TIE UP THE LEGAL PROCEEDINGS.

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2. ON TRIAL ARE 49 MEMBERS OF THE RED BRIGADES ACCUSED OF CONSTITUTING AN ARMED GROUP WITH THE INTENTION OF VIOLENTLY SUBVERTING THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ORDER THROUGH CRIMES SUCH AS KIDNAPPING, ROBBERY AND MURDER. WHILE A GOOD NUMBER OF THE 49 ACCUSED ARE STILL AT LARGE, THE 15 IN THE COURT ROOM WILL INCLUDE THE MAJOR FORMER LEADERS OF THE OGRANIZATION.

3. THE TRIAL IS REGARDED AS A DIFFICULT AND IMPORTANT ONE, DEMONSTRATING WHETHER THE STATE CAN CARRY THROUGH A TRIAL DESPITE THE RISKS OF RETRIBUTION AND VIOLENCE WHICH THE RED BRIGADES MAY UNDERTAKE DURING THE PRECEEDINGS. ALREADY ON FEBRUARY 14 THEY ASSASSINATED RICARDO PALMA, A JUSTICE MINISTRY OFFICIAL RESPONSIBLE FOR SECURITY MEASURES AT THE TRIAL AND FOR THE SPECIAL JAIL ESTABLISHED FOR THE RED BRIGADE PRISONERS.

4. THE TRIAL GAINED FURTHER NOTE A FEW DAYS AGO WHEN THE SECRETARY OF THE RADICAL PARTY, ADELAIDE AGLIETTA, WAS SELECTED-- AND AGREED--TO SERVE AS A JUROR. A RESIDENT OF TURIN, ALIETTA WAS CHOSEN BY LOT AFTER ONLY 6 OF SOME 137 PERSONS HAD ACCEPTED THE CALL TO JURY DUTY. SHE WILL BE THE FIRST PARTY SECRETARY TO SERVE ON A JURY, AND AS A POLITICAL FIGURE SHE WILL BE AN OBVIOUS TARGET FOR REPRISAL BY THE RED BRIGADES. WHILE PUBLICLY ACKNOWLEDGING HER FEAR OF PHYSICAL DANGER, ALIETTA HAS REFUSED ANY POLICE PROTECTION.

5. VIOLENCE IN ITALY DURING THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY REMAINED AT A HIGH LEVEL, ASSUMING INCREASINGLY ALARMING PROPORTIONS IN SCHOOLS. THE COMMUNIST PARTY RECENTLY RELEASED THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY WHICH IT PREPARED ON VIOLENCE IN FEBRUARY COMPARING IT WITH THE SITUATION IN JANUARY. ACCORDING TO THIS STUDY THERE WERE 9 ATTACKS AT POLICE HEADQUARTERS (12 IN JANUARY); 47 ATTACKS ON PARTY AND UNION HEADQUARTERS (59); 20 ATTACKS ON HOMES AND OFFICES UNCLASSIFIED

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(35); 59 OTHER MISCELLANEOUS ATTACKS (45); 5 SHOOTOUTS (8); 99 CASES OF VIOLENCE AGAINST INDIVIDUALS (102) AND THREE KIDNAPPINGS (3). THE COMMUNIST REPORT LAY SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON VIOLENCE IN THE SCHOOLS. IT REPORTS 19 ACTS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST TEACHERS AND 10 AGAINST TEACHERS' CARS.

6. ACCORDING TO THE REPORT, ROME WAS THE WORST HIT OF ITALIAN CITIES, WITH 98 ACTS OF VIOLENCE, ONE DEATH, 36 WOUNDED AND 127 MOTOR VEHICLES DESTROYED OR DAMAGED; THERE WERE ALSO 18 ATTACKS ON POLICE HEADQUARTERS AND 5 AGAINST PARTY HEADQUARTERS. AMONG OTHER CITIES MILAN SUFFERED 43 ACTS OF VIOLENCE; BOLOGNA 23; CAGLIARI 12; VENICE 10; TRENT 10; TURIN 10; SALERNO 9; NAPLES 8; FLORENCE 8 AND PADUA 7.

7. THE REPORT FURTHER STATES THAT OF THE 180 ATTACKS ON PERSONS, POLICE HEADQUARTERS AND PARTY OFFICES, 99 WERE COMMITTED BY LEFT GROUPS, 21 BY THE RIGHT, WITH THE ORIGIN OF THE REMAINDER UNKNOWN.HOLMES

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